



**\*\* This training is not required for Voluntary Kinship Placements \*\***

## Supporting the Emotional Healing of the Children in Your Care

By: Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

One of the most important and ever-present jobs of a foster parent is to help children heal from past traumas and emotional difficulties. Wounds from past negative events can act like invisible barriers to emotional connection. This can be especially true for the kids we care for, who may have entered our families as a result of past wounds. Unlocking these past events - exploring and acknowledging them - can help the child in your care break cycles of negative self-esteem, negative projections on others, and behaving toward the ones they love in ways they are not proud of.

Children and youth process their emotions in very unique ways. They tend to explore themselves and the world around them through their senses, through creative expression, and through their social connections. Emotional healing varies from child to child, depending on their cognitive development, the adverse experiences they have had, and what coping skills they may or may not have developed.

The best way to be a support person in a child's journey of emotional healing is to be creative and open, while recognizing that the child is an individual and that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Working as part of a team with school staff, medical personnel, and social workers, will ensure consistency for the child and help to maintain a clearer sense of what is in the child's best interest. You are an important advocate for the child in your care, so please be sure to share your insight and perspective.

Emotional healing can be looked at as a holistic process with many moving parts. Following are some steps you may want to consider in helping the children in your care heal from emotional wounds.

- When you talk with the child in your care about the hurts in his or her past, let him or her know that *it is ok to feel the grief and pain* associated with those past memories. Share with the child that those feelings are important parts of healing and that they will pass.
- During times of healing, it is important for the child in your care to *do things that make him or her feel good and are meaningful*. Help the child identify the activities he or she enjoys and that make him or her feel alive and happy. Finding ways to be thoughtfully kind and gentle to oneself, while rooting down into routine and meaning, is a key component of the healing process.
- *Let the child know he or she is not alone*. You can help the child in your care identify people that he or she can talk to who he or she trusts. It could be a therapist, a close relative, a teacher, or, of course, you! A therapist can help guide the child along a safe and productive path to healing. A therapist can also help support you as you support the child. It's also important that the child in your care knows you are there for him or her. Be sure to ask the child what he or she needs from you and be prepared if he or she cannot exactly articulate his or her needs. As he or she heals, it is important that the child has people in his or her corner that help him or her feel understood. You may need to help the child identify who that is for him or her, and help him or her connect to those individuals. He or she may feel awkward at times, and you may need to help him or her develop his or her comfort. Over time, you can help the child develop an inner voice of kindness that helps him or her believe he or she is worthy of care and concern from people he or she is close to.

- *Practice patience with the process*. Emotional healing takes time and the child in your care may lose patience and become frustrated. You can help by reminding him or her to take it easy, be patient, and remember how far he or she has come. Help the child think about what the future may bring when he or she is in a better place of wellness, after taking on the hard work of healing.

In order to help the children you care for through their emotional hurts and the healing process, you may find the following "tools" helpful to keep in your foster parenting toolkit:

- Consistency and structure in daily life
- Firm but fair rules and boundaries
- Open lines of communication between all caregivers/trusted adults
- Physical activity to expend excess energy and release "feel good" brain chemicals
- Developing daily living skills
- Individual and/or group therapy
- A nutritious diet
- Creative activities
- Spiritual activities
- Reading books with healing themes
- Interactions with animals
- Time exploring and experiencing the peace and wonder of nature
- Modeling healthy emotional expression

Emotional healing is a lifelong journey. The children you care for will make sense of their pasts in new ways for many years to come. As a foster parent, you can make all the difference in helping them to expand their coping skills tool box to offer a less bumpy road along the way.

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**BACKPACK**  
Coalition, Inc.

**Now accepting applications for 2016!**

If you know a family in need, please have them contact Kara Moore at 262-548-7284 or [kamoore@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:kamoore@waukeshacounty.gov)

The deadline for all applications is Friday, July 29th.





## Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry Ann Gaaney



Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry began after I read *The Lost Boy* by David Pelzer. It is his true story of when he was a foster child, and had only a brown grocery bag in which to place his few precious belongings as he was shuffled from foster home to foster home. This story stayed with me, and I began making quilts for homeless children. A conversation with my pastor, while in Arizona, initiated this ministry with the Arizona Foster Child agency. I started the Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry at this Arizona church. I

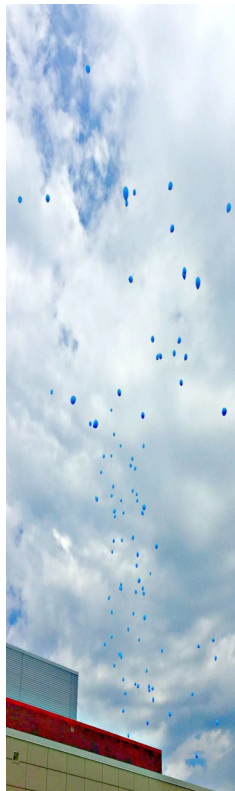
introduced the Pocket Pal Quilt idea to members at my home church, Norway Lutheran Church in Wind Lake, WI, and with their enthusiastic support, we began making these quilts for foster children in southeastern Wisconsin.

The Pocket Pal Quilts are 45" x 60" with a pocket 16" x 20" on the back of the quilt. The pocket is large enough to store the child's precious belongings if the child is shuffled from home to home. The pocket has a Velcro closure so that nothing falls out of the pocket. There is a name tag on the pocket, and the child's first name is written on the name tag so that the quilt remains with the child. The quilts are cozy, colorful, and made with the child's gender and age in mind when putting the quilts together.

Each quilt takes 20-30 hours to put together and costs about \$30 each. This ministry is supported by the Pocket Pal Quilters, the Norway Lutheran Church endowment fund, and donations.

## Balloon Launch

On May 31, we held a balloon launch at Waukesha County Human Services to recognize Foster Care Appreciation Month! We released 117 balloons, representing the number of children in foster care in Waukesha County. We would like to thank all of our foster parents for their dedication and compassion for caring for our foster care children.



## The Clothing Closet is Busting at the Seams!!!



The Clothing Closet is running out of room with donations of infant and toddler clothing. Pictured here are the racks and bins of clothing we have for families! Our wonderful volunteer, Carrie, has gone through the clothing to assure you that all the clothing is in good condition with no stains or imperfections. We have some really nice things in there, and many items still have store tags on them!! We are hoping that Kinship and Foster Families will use this resource. Please contact Linda Finn, one of our Human Services Support Specialists, at 262-548-7254, to arrange a personal appointment to come in and "shop" in the clothing closet!



## Annual Resource Family Picnic

**Date:** Saturday, July 23rd, 2016

**Time:** 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**Where:** Minooka Park, Picnic Area 1

Games, crafts, face painting, and make-your-own tie-dye t-shirt! Lunch will be provided!

For all foster care, relative care, and kinship care providers!

Please RSVP by July 15th at

<https://resourcefamilypicnic.eventbrite.com>





# Training and Events



## Parent Café

Parent Café's are an educational opportunity for parents to come together and deal with the stressors, worries and challenges of parenting in a supportive environment.

**October 4, December 6, 2016**

**5:30 PM - 8:00 PM**

**Center for Excellence**

N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-521-0317.

## Support Group For Dads

This is a new group to enhance group members' experience as fathers. Topics of discussion will include coping with stress; developing a better relationship with partner/spouse/child's mother; identifying positive role models in your life; identifying how you are a positive role model for your child(ren); discussing your role as a father and what you would like to change or improve.

**Fourth Tuesday of each month**

**July 26, 2016**

**August 23, 2016**

**6:00PM - 7:30PM**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI  
262-549-5575

## Mindful Parent = Happy Child

Mindfulness is a key element in happiness and proven to improve wellbeing, physically and mentally. Children also benefit from developing this relaxation state. Research has linked mindfulness practice to a decrease in temper tantrums and night terrors. The first week will focus on parents, while the second week, parents and children will be doing hands-on interactive activities.

**Tuesdays, August 16 & 23, 2016**

**5:30 - 7:00 P.M.**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd, Waukesha

Call to register at 262-549-5575. Complimentary childcare. Space is limited.

## Waukesha County Foster Parent Orientation

Waukesha Department of Health and Human Services invites you to attend a foster parent orientation meeting. These meetings are open to anyone who is interested in learning about our foster care program. **If you are currently in the process of becoming a licensed foster parent, you are required to attend an orientation session prior to approval of your foster care license.**

We encourage you to complete the online foster parent pre-placement training prior to attending this information session. The training can be found online at <http://wcpdps.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training/>. Please save the certificates after you have completed each module. These are required to become licensed.

**When:**

**Second Tuesday of each month**

**July 12, 2016**

**August 9, 2016**

**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

**Where:** Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188

To register for an orientation session, contact your foster care coordinator.

## Training

**Parents Place Programs**

**262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org**

- **Kid's Anger (Parent and Child Class)**  
Mondays, July 11 - 25; 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- **Having Fun With Your Kids In The Kitchen (Parent and Child Class)**  
Wednesdays, July 13 - August 24;  
10:00 - 11:30 AM
- **Love and Logic®**  
Mondays, August 1 - 22; 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- **Adult Anger**  
Tuesdays, August 2 - 16; 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **Co-Parenting**  
Tuesdays, August 2 - 23; 5:30 - 7:00 PM

## Foster Parent Support Group

**First Wednesday of each month**

**July 6, 2016**

**August 3, 2016**

**6:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI  
262-549-5575

On-site daycare is available, but you must register in advance to secure a slot as there may be a cut-off depending on the number of children.

## Contact Numbers:

**Waukesha County  
Health & Human Services**  
262-548-7212

**Vickie Smith, Foster Care  
Licensing Supervisor**  
262-970-4761

**Susan Peck, Foster Care Level 2  
Coordinator**  
262-896-8574

**Libby Sinclair, Relative Foster  
Care Level 1 Coordinator**  
262-548-7277

**Megan Quandt, Kinship & Foster  
Care Coordinator**  
262-548-7373

**Jessica Morris, Kinship & Foster  
Care Coordinator**  
262-548-7256

**Eve Altizer, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor**  
262-548-7272

**Rebecca Hollister, Ongoing Social  
Work Supervisor**  
262-548-7271

## Social Workers:

Tracy Clark .....262-548-7270

Megan Fishler .....262-896-8570

Abbey Girman .....262-548-7695

Danita Graham .....262-548-7341

Laura Jahnke .....262-548-7359

Jamie Kasten .....262-548-7265

Becca Kuester .....262-896-6857

Jessica Larsen .....262-548-7346

Maria Maurer .....262-548-7345

Chelsey Nisbet .....262-896-6896

Rachel O'Sullivan .....262-548-7639

Stacy Pawlak .....262-548-7262

Elizabeth Russo .....262-548-7349

Kim Sampson .....262-548-7273

Linda Senger .....262-548-7698

Sara Waldron .....262-548-7371

**Children's Mental Health Outreach**  
262-548-7666

**Medical Emergency: 911**  
**Family Emergency: 211 or**  
262-547-3388

**Foster Parent Mentors**  
David & Jen Mersfelder  
262-542-2926

**If an Allegation of Abuse or  
Neglect has been made  
against you, please call:**

**FASPP**  
Norma Schoenberg  
920-922-9627